

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE INTELLIGENCE INFORMATION REPORT

NATIONAL SECURITY
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Classification/Control Markings

This report contains unprocessed information. Plans and/or policies should not be evolved or modified solely on basis of this report.

1. COUNTRY: BRAZIL (BR)

2. REPORT NUMBER: [REDACTED]

3. TITLE: More on the FROTA Dismissal (U)

4. PROJECT NUMBER: N/A

5. DATE OF INFORMATION: 771010-771016

6. DATE OF REPORT: 771021

7. DATE & PLACE OF ACQUISITION: 771016
Brasilia

8. REFERENCES: [REDACTED]

9. ASSESSMENT: SOURCE B INFO 2

10. ORIGINATOR: [REDACTED]

11. REQUEST EVALUATION YES OPO

12. PREPARING OFFICER: [REDACTED]

13. APPROVING AUTHORITY: [REDACTED]

14. SOURCE: [REDACTED]

EO50X1

15. SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS:

D YES ☐
I
R NO ☒
C

16. SUMMARY:

(E) New light is shed on the before, during and after aspects of Gen Sylvio FROTA's "was resigned" episode. The FROTA farewell document was meant to be discussed later this month with the High Command and used as a possible lever against the President. The High Command agrees with certain issues raised by FROTA, issues which GEISEL will most likely have to face, after shifts occur affecting several BA generals.

17. SUBJECT AND AREA CODES: [REDACTED]

REC'D DS-4B 9 NOV '77

121

18. DISTRIBUTION BY ORIGINATOR:
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19. DOWNGRADING AND DECLASSIFICATION DATA:

Classified [REDACTED]
EXEMPT FROM GENERAL DECLASSIFICATION
SCHEDULE BY EXECUTIVE ORDER 11652.
EXEMPTION CATEGORY 2.
DECLASSIFIED ON 31 DEC 2007.

20. ENCLOSURES:

None

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21. This IR contains 6 pages.

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U.S. G.P.O. 1977-2 41-130/1191

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22. DETAILS:

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1. (U) On 16 Oct. 77, coded source [REDACTED] to relate the following:
2. (C) On 10 Oct. 77, the President summoned Gen CALDERARI, head of the Ordnance Department, ostensibly to discuss his future assignment prospects. Actually, GEISEL scolded CALDERARI for having been supporting the Army Minister's group (Gen Sylvio FROTA) in the on-going political reform debates.
3. (C) CALDERARI reportedly apologized to the President, protesting his personal loyalty but admitting that certain rumors about legalizing communists and socialists had frightened him into establishing contact with politicians who were boosting FROTA's presidential candidacy. CALDERARI promised he'd stop and keep out of political intrigues in the future.
4. (C) Following this meeting, CALDERARI, late on 11 Oct. 77, visited FROTA. He allegedly implored FROTA to stop what he was doing because it was displeasing the President.
5. (C) FROTA reportedly told him that he would not because he "feared for the future of the Revolution". FROTA then informed CALDERARI that he planned to discuss an important document with the High Command in its meeting scheduled for 20 Oct. 77, (since cancelled by BETHLEM). The Minister explained that he'd secretly dispatched copies of the document to the Commanders of the I, II, III, and IV Armies, and would provide copies to the remaining members of the High Command later in the week (circa 13-14 Oct. 77).
6. (C) Unbeknownst to FROTA, the BASGS, MG ENIO dos Santos Pinheiro, had secretly informed GEISEL of what was happening through MG HUGO ABREU, chief of the Presidential Military Staff. GEISEL then dispatched trusted agents to consult with the four field commanders. The four assured GEISEL that they were loyal to him and would stand by him.
7. (C) Allegedly, the GEISEL agents did not specifically tell the generals that FROTA would be fired. They were only asked what their attitude would be if this became the case. And all this reportedly occurred sometime between 3 and 7 October.
8. (C) On 12 Oct 77, after GEISEL confronted FROTA and asked him to resign, FROTA is supposed to have requested until close of business to submit his official resignation. What FROTA did not know is that early that same morning, MG ARNIZAUT, the CG of the Planalto, had been asked to call a partial alert and to keep an eye on FROTA's movements, and particularly,

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on the activities of the Army Intelligence/Counterintelligence Center's members.

9. (C) When FROTA returned to BA HQS in the Military Sector, he was surprised to find ARNIZAUT there with his staff, and to discover that they were taking orders directly from the President (via HUGO ABREU).

10. (C) FROTA got members of the BA Intelligence/Counterintelligence Center together to act as bodyguards. He feared being arrested by the President, meaning ARNIZAUT (MG Heitor Furtado ARNIZAUT de Mattos).

11. (C) FROTA sent messages (intercepted by the SNI) to the High Command's members asking them to come to Brasilia that same day to "discuss an urgent matter". [REDACTED]

12. (C) [REDACTED] FROTA's farewell document [REDACTED] was approved for release to the news media (actually the press) because the "President has nothing to fear from FROTA".

13. (C) [REDACTED] FROTA can even engage in political activities because, again, he, personally, does not represent a threat to the President. FROTA's offense lay in attempting to challenge the President's authority, thereby disuniting the Armed Forces, and this is why GEISEL dismissed ("caused him to be resigned") FROTA.

14. (C) As for the FROTA-farewell paper, coded source reports that most of it, save for the part beginning with the tale of his dismissal ("Na manhã de hoje, 12 de outubro", etc) constitutes the document referred to in para 5, above.

15. (C) Source added that based on soundings conducted among BA officers close to the members of the High Command, the parts dealing with: the need to create a complementary corps of reserve officers with guaranteed tenure; to direct-commission sergeants; to provide for a CHAMPUS-like dependents medical care program; to oppose the formation of a socialist party; to weaken the national security apparatus; to separate the public from the Armed Forces; to quickly check into and put a stop to corruption; to hire known actual or ex-subversives as government employees; to leave the Armed Forces out of the President's decision-making process; were all well-received by the High Command's members. They offered that the President needed to look into these areas.

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16. (C) The part of the document which addresses the government's foreign policy was not well-received by the generals. Their judgment in re the formulation of foreign policy is that it is none of the Army's business. But it is of concern to the Army that internal security be strengthened and that the professional/personal well-being of its members be tended to. Anti-corruption measures are also not taboo to the BA High Command inasmuch as these deal with a domestic matter.
17. (C) Coded source then said that it is widely believed among his BA sources that the new BA Minister, Gen BETHLEM, will take up these matters with the President, but only after the Army's "house is put in order", i.e.: only generals loyal to GEISEL are in command positions, and the general staff is rid of FROTA sympathizers.
18. (C) In this regard, coded source offered that generals FLORIMAR CAMPELLO, the Vice Chief of Staff, Antonio Ferreira MARQUES, the G2, Heitor Gomes de ALMEIDA, the G3, MIRANDA Leal, the G4, and Jorge Sá de PINHO, the G1 would remain in place, at least for a while. None was an overt FROTA sympathizer, and two at least were said to be pro-GEISEL (the Vice Chief and the G3).
19. (C) GEN TOURINHO now seemed to have the inside track for the vacant post of head of the Armed Forces, because GEISEL, as of now, was said to feel that he needed trusted agents in command of the army areas. It is because of this feeling that Gen Jose PINTO will remain in Rio, and SAMUEL Correa, ex BA ARMA to Washington, D.C. will succeed Gen FRITZ come late November.
20. (C) MG Antonio Carlos de ANDRADA SERPA, acting III Army CG, apparently has his fourth star assured, thanks to energetic steps he took on 12 Oct., upon receiving the Planalto message, to insure that no one got any ideas re supporting FROTA. (SERPA was acting CG, BETHLEM was in Rio, on vacation, on 12 Oct. 77).
21. (C) MG Antonio BANDEIRA, who still sees communists everywhere, stood by GEISEL in the "emergency", and was in no danger of being immediately relieved of his command (BANDEIRA likes FROTA but is afraid of GEISEL).
22. (C) BG Antinio CAMPOS of the BA Intelligence/Counterintelligence Center, had already been fired and BG Edmundo MURGEL, a FIGUEIREDO protege and good friend to BETHLEM, at the moment was thought to have the best chances of being named chief of the BA's "spy-on-itself" organization. CAMPOS will not be punished, however, for his role in aiding FROTA's political moves.
23. (C) Actually, GEISEL is not expected to "punish" any of the FROTAists.

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Their transfer to less impressive/important posts would suffice.

24. (G) As for HUGO ABREU, it is now believed by coded source that it was he who leaked the SNI chief's "candidacy" to the press earlier in the summer. According to coded source, HUGO ABREU probably did so at GEISEL's - or GOLBERY's (the Presidential Civil Staff Chief) orders, to see how the public - to include the Armed Forces - would react to a FIGUEIREDO designation as GEISEL's heir. Source doesn't believe HUGO ABREU capable of treachery.

25. (E) Coded source also feels that GEISEL will democratize BRAZIL because he wants to be known in history as the man who did this. Besides, there are no more "bulls in china shops" (i.e. FROTA) to challenge/embarrass the President politically. There is only the small matter of tending to the issues FROTA raised in his farewell document, that is, those which the BA feels need be addressed, and soon, according to coded source's informants/contacts.

ORIGINATOR'S COMMENTS: (E) Coded source has shed additional light on the "why it happened", and the "how it happened" in re FROTA's forced resignation. Note that no four-star general actually knew for a fact that GEISEL would fire FROTA; they must have suspected it, especially after the GEISEL agents' secret visits, but didn't know if and when it would happen.

Note, also, that FROTA feared he'd be ordered arrested by GEISEL, especially after he learned that the Planalto CG had called an alert in compliance with GEISEL's order. This could explain the presence of armed Intelligence agents at the BA HQS building on 12 Oct. 77.

Note that the President had carefully "G2'd" his intention to fire FROTA, and then executed his move swiftly and thoroughly.

As for GEISEL's fears of FROTA as a political force, he evidently doesn't see him as such, or he wouldn't have allowed FROTA's farewell document - and all its political charges - to be released to the public. It must be remembered, though, that if he hadn't done so, the document's contents would most likely have been spread about via covert/and or gossip channels. After all, FROTA's ideas are shared by a number of Brazilians in uniform, to include some politicians and journalists. Robbing them of their "underground thunder" minimizes the chances for any unpleasant episodes later (eg: the need to arrest illegal pamphleteers, track them down, etc.)

The fact that the BA High Command is in sympathy with parts of FROTA's farewell document means that GEISEL will have to at least hear them out on these matters, study the points, and then do something to assuage their fears, (eg: re internal security, to improve the BA's fringe benefits and reserve officer corps' chances for a full career). It could be conjectured at this time that one reason that the

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generals stood by GEISEL was that he - thru his secret agents - promised to hear the BA High Command out re the issues raised (at that time "to be raised") by FROTA.

Coded source believes that HUGO ABREU leaked FIGUEIREDO's candidacy with GEISEL's knowledge. If he is correct, and the weeks ahead should, hopefully, shed more light on this, then it doesn't appear likely that HUGO ABREU will be fired in the near future. As for the shift in generals, the weeks ahead will also reveal source's accuracy (actually the accuracy of his contacts) vis-à-vis other BA source's reports - conflicting - re this subject.

Finally, time will also confirm whether GEISEL really wants to go down in Brazilian history as the man who restored democracy to BRAZIL, and will also let us know just what the word democracy means for GEISEL.

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